have been gradually picking up. Due to continued economic sanctions against Iraq, normal trade relations with that country cannot be restored till such time the economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council against Iraq are lifted. However, export of foodstufs, medicines and items of essential civilian needs to Iraq, is permissible within the parameters of the UN Security Council resolutions in this regard.

(b) As a result of the economic sanctions, exports to Iraq and Kuwait of items like engg. goods, food products, textiles, gem & jewellery etc. came down to Rs. 117.18 crores during 1990-91 (Provisional) as against Rs. 323.63 crores during 1989-90 (Provisional). Project exports to Iraq have also been affected.

India's trade in hard currency

2883. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will be Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to take some steps to have trade in hard currency soon;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof with background for such a step;

(c) whether India would be benefited by this move; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) India's trade is generally transacted in freely convertible foreign currencies (i.e., hard currencies). However, in case of certain countries, India has bilateral clearing arrangements envisaging balanced trade in non-convertible Indian Rupees.

Indo-US Trade Council Chairman's visit to India

2884. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of Indo-US Trade Council visited India recently; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the discussions held and what steps are being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The Indo-US Joint Business Council comprising Indian and US businessmen had its fourteenth meeting on 19-20 November, 1991 in New Delhi which was attended by the Chairman of US-India Joint Business Council. The agenda for discussions included implication for US investment of economic policy reforms in India, technology transfer, multilateral trade negotiations, programmes and policies to promote trade/ and investment, intellectual property protection and view of Indo-US trade.

The Joint Business Council made a number of recommendations on the subject that it discussed. The Indo-US JBC is a non-governmental body.

Export order for leather products

2885. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, New Delhi has received large export orders of leather items including shoes and safety boots, bags and fashionable items;

(b) whether some of the Public Sector Undertakings are also manufacturing such items;

(c) whether Government have taken any decision to utilise the available resources with some Public Sector Undertakings to meet the exporters' requirements of such products; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, New Delhi, has not received any large export orders for shoes, safety boots, bags and fashionable items. However, it has received some trial orders worth around US $ 1,00,000 for leather jackets and executive accessories during the last eight months.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Tannery & Footwear Corporation of India Ltd., Kanpur and the Ordinance Equipment Factory, Kanpur are manufacturing footwear